

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

October 15, 2002

7:00 PM

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Gatsas, Guinta, Sysyn, Osborne, Pinard, O’Neil,
Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Thibault and Forest

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Baines requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Eric Sawyer, 40 Wilmot Street, Manchester stated:

I have two comments today. I would hope that in this reorganization of the City departments – the Finance consolidation and the Assessors, that you hold public hearings. I spoke to the Mayor earlier about some particular concerns with the abatement process for the elderly and disabled that. Alderman Gatsas, you hit it right on the nose. The City needs alternate revenue streams. I have written many letters to the Mayor and all of you saying that Manchester is the economic powerhouse for the region. The City departments have marketable services that they could offer to other communities. It is done across the Midwest. It is not uncommon to find building inspectors from one community inspecting in another community or health inspectors from one community inspecting restaurants in another community. It is not uncommon to find street sweepers from one community sweeping streets in another community. It is just an understood way of doing business. Why Manchester’s municipal departments don’t market their services to the surrounding communities is beyond me. It is for the benefit of everybody. It keeps costs down for the surrounding communities and it helps the City of Manchester and it helps our taxpayers. Thank you.

Robin Comstock, Chamber of Commerce, Manchester stated:

Recently you had a presentation by Planning that overviewed the vision of the Granite Street corridor. Tonight you heard about downtown living. We want you to know that we are very

excited about the blueprint to our future and its innovative and progressive visions, which will be cemented by necessary changes in our system that will facilitate our ability to turn our vision into a reality. As you continue your process of evaluating our future direction, we would like you to know that we applaud both the Planning Department's vision and having participated in the Mayor's Workforce Housing Conference we are particularly interested in the aspects of the plan that focus on diversification in housing. A downtown built on a commitment of mixed use, which includes private and commercial, business and homes, is a downtown that is vital and dynamic. It is also a downtown that is both user and developer friendly and that will ultimately build itself as a desirable center with a very strong sense of place. The Chamber's downtown committee is primarily focused on downtown living for all spheres of a well-balanced neighborhood to include both affordable and exclusive housing, all are workforce housing. It is the residents of the downtown who will ultimately support the tenants and the amenities that will sustain and advance our downtown vision and Manchester as a desirable place to be. The Chamber has organized an event, which the Mayor spoke to earlier in the downtown to highlight downtown living opportunities and to encourage members of our community to think of existing space and its possible conversion uses. This event is called Downtown Living: Manchester's Newest Neighborhood. You are all invited and welcome. It is November 7 at 5 PM. You can just call the Chamber and we can direct you to the point of start. Thank you very much.

Joyce Coll, 61 Sandy Brook Street, Manchester stated:

I am here as a concerned taxpaying mother with two school ages children. One in third grade and one in eighth grade at Highland Goffes Falls and Southside. I am also here as a representative of the Highland Goffes Falls PTA and I would like to talk briefly about the overcrowding at Highland Goffes Falls and a little bit about the school budget. Let me first address the planned growth in the South end of Manchester, which has a direct impact on the overcrowding at Highland Goffes Falls. The Planning Board is aware of growth in the South end of Manchester. The City is aware of plans for new housing, both in the recent past and in the near future. There are currently plans for a 15 home subdivision on Brown Avenue. There is also development in the Green Acres elementary school area. As a taxpayer, I would like to know what the plans are for accommodating the educational needs of the families who will be purchasing these new homes. I am a concerned parent of Highland Goffes Falls because that school is already overcrowded. This year, Highland Goffes Falls had the second highest new pupil growth in the City, which we must remember was planned growth. It stands to reason that the growth will continue with new development. I am concerned about the ramification caused by overcrowding with the most pertinent ongoing issue of the poor air quality within the school. Adding more people within this overcrowded environment will only add to the air quality issues and the school's lack of proper ventilation. My daughter's education is at risk as every November when the school needs to close up due to the colder weather my daughter begins to have issues concentrating and teachers from time to time have reported to me that mid day she is putting her head down on her desk. She complains of being tired and lethargic and I currently deal with this by making

sure she has an adequate supply of water throughout the day and I request that she is allowed to take a walk outside around the school for some fresh air, which of course interferes with her school work. I shouldn't have to compromise her educational development for her health. I understand that the School District is going for a \$70 million bond for middle and high school renovations including adding classrooms and accommodations for tuition communities. I am concerned that committing monies to something that is tentative, being that there is no absolute guarantee of enrollment numbers for these outlying towns. I would like to see plans where some of this money is allocated to expanding the classrooms at Highland Goffes Falls where there is adequate land for this to happen. I am concerned that five years from now there will be an increase in the school population due to the added housing that is planned in the South end and there won't be any money to address it. The air quality and the overcrowding go hand in hand at Highland Goffes Falls and this must be addressed. Please present to me a plan that will accommodate these issues.

Joe Kelly Levasseur, 866 Elm Street, Manchester stated:

I want to talk a little bit about the Siberian channel 96. As many of you already know we have been changed from channel 16 over to Siberia, 96, with as snowy station that people don't get and can barely see. It is not really a matter of being changed to 96, it was more the way that it was done in the cloak of darkness without anybody who was a producer at MCTV being told about it so that we, as producers of our own shows, could warn the people that the channel had been moved. There is a move and I have been hearing this around that you guys think that...some Aldermen think that we should separate the public access channel from the other two – the government and the educational channel. I don't believe we have a problem with MCTV. I think that the three channels, even though I really would not prefer to have three because I think two is fine, was good enough. I think what we have is a management problem. That is all it is. It is just a simple management problem at the top. We don't need three channels but now that we have three, we have...there are people out there who are producers of TV shows who don't have time slots to tape their shows. If they want to tape their shows they have to take a camera out and tape it at another location. If you have two channels and you don't have enough time slots for people to tape their shows then why would you put a third channel on? Again, I really believe your Honor that it is a management problem and that if you change the management at the top I think you would have a lot more people who wouldn't be having these problems. The fact that we have no time slots to do these TV shows could be easily rectified by expanding the time and also adding just a Saturday in there and then you would have more people who could do their own shows. I would like to talk a little bit about the Assessors situation. I have been watching that from a distance. When I was an Alderman I got along very well with the Assessor's Department and I thought they did a very good job with what they had to handle. I think that the plan to put a couple of more people below the Assessor to be able to handle the in-house job would be the right way to go. I would rather not see them consolidated with another group yet. I would like to see how it works out with the next revaluation with how they do it in-house instead of hiring an outside group. I am also wondering, your Honor, and

I don't know if this can be answered right now but if the tax rate will be known before the election. I know that you put it off from September 1 to try to get all the things together by tonight's date to try to get that tax rate down but would it be done before the election? I think that people when they go to the voting booth should know what the tax rate is before the election, not after the election. Thank you very much.

There being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Forest, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business can be presented and on motion of Alderman Garrity duly seconded by Alderman DeVries, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk